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## EDITORIAL

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the first issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International (PPI)* to be published since the second inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the USA. Many of us might be scratching our heads wondering how such a result could be possible. Others may have sceptical theories, and some might even feel triumphant and jubilant. No doubt there will be a normative swing to the right whilst those on the left look on aghast and are pushed further into the margins.

It can be expected that the attack on consciousness will be a concern to many authors, practitioners, and readers. The validation of emotive rhetoric, shocking and oppressive to many, is reality we may all have to face for some time yet as two of the most powerful men in the world continue to conduct their business in resetting the geopolitical stage. The spectres of Nazism and white supremacy are looming as the imperialist war in Ukraine continues, and Trump and Netanyahu conceive a final solution that would consummate the Palestinian genocide. The possible effects of all this on culture, on human lives, and on the subjective sphere are still unpredictable, but they will surely pose unprecedented challenges to psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychoanalysts.

## CONTROVERSIAL DISCUSSION

The rise of new forms of imperialism, conservatism, and fascism in the world become the backdrop to our leading articles in this issue of *PPI*. These articles are part of a controversial discussion about psychotherapy in the UK. By reading this discussion, we can get a glimpse of some of the ideas and political forces that are currently clashing around the world.

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Colin Feltham, a sceptic of 'woke' mindsets, challenges the assumptions of a 'woke ideology', claiming it makes democratic discourse difficult, if not impossible. His article was submitted to us some time ago and posed us with various ethical and political dilemmas. We felt that Feltham's ideas were so revealing and so worrying, so representative of what is happening in the world, that we could not risk declining publication. So, we made the decision to accept the text, but accompany it with a responsive dialogue.

We thought it was important that Feltham's ideas could be published without censorship, alongside an open discussion and counter-argument. To that end we are grateful to Keith Tudor, another senior white Western man, for his initial peer-reviewed analysis and critique, and his further dialogue with Feltham, as a colleague with opposing views. We offer these to the reader and hope that it helps to facilitate our capacity to think and mentalise now and in times to come.

### **PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES**

After the impetuous controversial discussion between Feltham and Tudor, we offer three peer-reviewed articles, the first on experiences of racism in the UK and the next two with practical proposals, one on psychotherapy for people with HIV and the other on community psychology for Palestine. The first peer-reviewed article is by Vahishta Bomi Pardiwalla and Ohemaa Nkansa-Dwamena who use a phenomenological approach to explore racial microaggression experiences of British Asians. Pardiwalla and Nkansa-Dwamena present research with eight participants, each of them interviewed with semi-structured interviews, which reveal how racial microaggressions impact participants emotionally, personally, professionally, and socially.

Moving from research to practical proposals, Ka Ka Chong introduces a social justice informed psychotherapy for people living with HIV. The author explores how social justice principles can be integrated into psychotherapy to address experiences shaped by factors such as race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Chong's article advocates for the use of intersectionality as a tool for conceptualising, critically reflecting, and mitigating the relational dynamics.

Chong's proposal is still psychotherapeutic, while Pedro Henrique Antunes da Costa and Kíssila Teixeira Mendes, in the following article, seek to overcome what they describe as the political limits of psychotherapy by drawing on past experiences of Palestinian community psychology. These experiences, as interpreted by Antunes da Costa and Mendes, demonstrate the need to go beyond psychology, academia, and institutionalisation through a political praxis linked to liberation and anti-colonial struggle. The authors defend both solidarity with Palestine and the production of knowledge that engages with Palestinian resistance, especially from the perspective of Palestinians.

## NOTES FROM THE FRONT LINE

In addition to the three controversial discussion pieces and the three peer-reviewed articles, this issue of *PPI* includes two Notes from the Front Line. The first of these is a reflection by Ceri Lyck-Bowen on the Israel–Palestine conflict. Unlike the article by Antunes da Costa and Mendes, which calls for engagement and solidarity with Palestine, Lyck-Bowen’s note seems to lean more towards neutrality, highlighting reasons why all nations need to remain as neutral as possible in the conflict. The main thing here is a ceasefire, respect for civilian lives, and long-term solutions such as the two-state solution.

The second Note from the Front Line is a reflection by Hannah Charlton on the consequences of colonial childcare. Charlton narrates and examines in detail the story of Marjorie, who spent her early years in India under British rule, and who felt torn between her British-born mother and her Indian ayah. This childhood experience was reconstructed and treated psychotherapeutically many years later, revealing significant aspects of the British empire and colonial life.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The next issue of *PPI* is a special issue on the theme of the African diaspora. Focusing on the personal, social, and professional experiences of British African counsellors, psychotherapists, and trainees, the issue features Rotimi Akinsete as guest editor. This looks to be an exciting and vibrant edition, continuing the identity of this journal that supports the principles of intellectual and emotional literacy, creative thinking and deconstruction, and of social and political context in the quest of expanding consciousness.